

Message Text

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CINC USAREUR HEIDELBERG

CINC USAFE RAMSTEIN

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TAGS: NATO, MILI, AWACS, GW

SUBJECT: FRG PRESS REPORTING ON NATO AWACS

BEGIN SUMMARY: MAJOR FRG NEWSPAPERS DEVOTED CONSIDERABLE SPACE IN THEIR DECEMBER 9 AND 10 ISSUES TO THE NATO AWACS. FOR THE MOST PART, THESE REPORTS WERE EXPLANATORY AND REFRAINED FROM COMMENT. THE FACT THAT NATO DEFENSE MINISTERS HAD POSTPONED UNTIL EARLY NEXT YEAR WHETHER OR NOT TO PROCURE THE SYSTEM FOR NATO WAS HEAVILY EMPHASIZED. END SUMMARY.

1. THOSE FEW NEWSPAPERS WHICH COMMENTED POINTED OUT THAT THE HIGH COST OF AWACS MADE MANY DEFENSE MINISTERS POSTPONE A DECISION. ACCORDING TO THE "SUEDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG" (INDEPENDENT LIBERAL), THE DUTCH HAD EMERGED AS THE MOST OBSTINATE OPPONENTS, TO THE POINT WHERE ANY IDEA ABOUT A "UNIFORM" NATO AEW FLEET HAD TO BE ABANDONED.

2. ADELBERT WEINSTEIN WROTE IN THE "FRANKFURTER

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ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG" (CONSERVATIVE INDEPENDENT) THAT A

DECISION FOR OR AGAINST AWACS WAS PARTICULARLY PROBLEM-LADEN FOR THE FRG. BECAUSE THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC IS ON THE FRONT LINE OF THE ALLIANCE, IT IS GREATLY INTERESTED IN A MODERN WARNING SYSTEM. AT THE SAME TIME, IT IS ECONOMICALLY THE STRONGEST ALLIANCE PARTNER AND HENCE IS FACED BY AN AVALANCHE OF DEFENSE EXPENDITURES. THUS AGREEING TO AWACS COULD FORCE THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN THE DEFENSE MINISTRY TO CUT INVESTMENTS FOR THE FEDERAL ARMY AND NAVY.

3. CHRISTIAN POTYKA IN THE DECEMBER 10 ISSUE OF THE "SUEDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG" NOTES THAT THE MUCH PRAISED NADGE SYSTEM WHICH WAS BEGUN IN 1967 HAD ITS FIRST SUCCESSFUL TEST ONLY TWO AND ONE-HALF YEARS AGO. HE GOES ON TO CLAIM THAT NADGE IS NOW CONSIDERED OBSOLETE AND MEANINGFUL ONLY AS A SUPPLEMENT TO AWACS. POTYKA ASKS WHO IS TO GUARANTEE THAT AWACS WILL NOT ALSO BE CONSIDERED ONLY A "LUXURIOUS CRUTCH" FOR NEW AND BETTER SYSTEMS IN A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME? HE CONSIDERS IT REMARKABLE THAT SO FEW INQUIRIES HAVE BEEN MADE CONCERNING AWACS' ITS VULNERABILITY. MUST AIRCRAFT OF SUCH IMMENSE MATERIAL AND STRATEGIC VALUE NOT BECOME "DREAM TARGETS" OF ENEMY MISSILES AND FIGHTER PLANES? WHAT COSTS WILL HAVE TO BE INCURRED TO PROTECT THESE ELECTRONIC FORTRESSES? POTYKA CLOSSES BY CLAIMING THAT OPERATIONS OVER SAFE NATO REAR AREAS WOULD NOT MAKE FULL USE OF AWACS' CAPABILITIES.
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